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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday, January 21, 1935.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Hot Fruits for Winter Meals." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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Have you ever noticed how many people have one-track minds about preparing food? Have you ever noticed how easy it is to get in a rut -- to fall in the habit of fixing the same old things in the same old way. Yet folks who are extra smart and thrifty about feeding the family know the value in dollars and appetites of serving the low-cost common foods in different ways for variety.

Take the case of fruit, for example -- especially the less expensive fruit in the market at this time of year. Sometimes I think almost everybody nowadays is getting one-sided about fruit. Since refrigeration came in, we've all acquired the habit of serving fruit chilled -- chilled fruit juice to drink, chilled fruit cup to start the meal, or an iced fruit dessert to end it. The result is that a lot of us have forgotten the many delicious hot fruit dishes that our grandmothers used to serve, especially in midwinter. Old-time cooks made a specialty of hot fruit drinks and steaming fruit desserts and piping hot fruit sauces and baked fruits straight from the oven.

Well, I'm not saying a word against our refreshing modern cold fruit dishes. But I'd like to say that some of these old-time hot things have their advantages, too. They're good for variety's sake. And they're especially welcome in shivery winter weather.

First, let's recall a few of the real old-timers that housewives used to bring on the table when their only winter fruit supplies were dried or stored fruit or fruit preserves. Hot spiced dried apple-sauce was a favorite in those days, made with home-dried apples and often served with large round molasses cookies. Other stewed dried fruits also often came on the table steaming. For example, there were hot stewed prunes or peaches or apricots and sometimes a combination of these stewed together. Very often a stick of cinnamon and maybe some clove buds went into the pot to add flavor and also warmth to the dish.

Stored pears and apples went into the oven. For special occasions they were sweetened with honey and stuffed with raisins and chopped nuts. They often came to the table right out of the oven. The family ate them hot one night and cold the next -- to save work for the cook.

As for the favorite old-time hot fruit puddings, I can't hope to mention all of them. Probably the most famous on the list is the Christmas plum pudding.



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Other steamed desserts were fig and cranberry pudding. Then there were the hot pies, of course -- hot apple or raisin or prune pie. And there was hot apple betty -- an apple and crumb dessert, you know, good with cream or hard sauce. As for the hot cakes, there was hot applesauce cake and also hot upside-down cake. Apples were the fruit they used to use in upside-down cake. Today we make it with sliced canned pineapple or peaches, or apricots -- almost every kind of fruit fresh or canned. And tapioca pudding made with fruit -- there's another dish good right from the stove.

The old-fashioned hot fruit drinks included hot fruit punch, hot spiced cider and hot spiced grapejuice. These are good both at meals and between meals. For a freezing winter evening, they make good party drinks.

As I said, most of these dishes date back a considerable number of years and were invented by cooks of long ago. But more recently we've taken to certain hot fruits with the main course at the meal. The quick grilled or broiled meals popular today -- an ideal place to work in fried or broiled fruits. Canned peaches or apricots with a bit of butter on top just browned under the direct flame in the oven make excellent company for meat or a delicious dessert in themselves. I don't need to tell you how good fried apples are with bacon or ham or pork. Hot fried pineapple slices are another delicious accompaniment for meat. And broiled or baked bananas fit in almost any grilled combination.

The only kind of fruit that won't make a hit served hot is citrus fruit. Our oranges and grapefruit don't take to heating. Except in the case of hot lemonade, we prefer them raw. But most canned fruit you can serve heated for variety. And you can heat many marmalades and preserves to use as hot sauces over ice cream or white cake or other desserts that need a sauce.

There's just one point I'd like to mention about serving fruits hot. They require less sweetening hot than cold. They also require less spice, if you are adding spice. And all hot fruit dishes like most other dishes are better if you add a very little bit of salt to develop their flavor.

Now for the menu for a cold winter night featuring hot fruit dishes. The main dish is a casserole of sausage, cabbage and sliced apples. With that, how about some baked sweet potatoes. For dessert, you might have some hot peach tapioca made with canned or dried peaches. And coffee to drink. Once more: Casserole of sausage, cabbage and apple; Baked sweet potatoes; Hot peach tapioca; and Coffee.

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